



# Environmental News

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## **INCIDENT-FREE Y2K TRANSITION REPORTED FOR EPA, ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS NATIONWIDE; PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP CREDITED**

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The year 2000 arrived with no Y2K disruptions reported in key environmental sectors, including drinking water, wastewater treatment, chemical-related manufacturing, and hazardous materials. The Dec. 31-Jan. 3 millennium "rollover" period was the culmination of more than a year of cooperative effort between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state and local governments, private industry and trade associations, and municipal water systems.

EPA officials credit the success of the Y2K transition to careful planning and hard work by hundreds of EPA employees and thousands of others involved in environmental sectors and the leadership of the President's Council on Year 2000.

"The Administration had the foresight to encourage federal agencies to work in a cooperative, voluntary spirit across the country," said Al Pesachowitz, an EPA associate assistant administrator and the agency's top Y2K official. "The trade associations and businesses and governments at the local and state level worked closely with us to ensure their own readiness, to collect Y2K status information and pass it voluntarily back to the federal Y2K coordinators. This public-private partnership was the key to managing technology challenges effectively."

To help raise awareness and ensure readiness, EPA initiated more than a half-million individual contacts with municipal and other local and state government officials and organizations. One example of the partnership at work is the development of a widely used Y2K guidance document for small and medium-sized chemical facilities. The document developed jointly by EPA, the Chemical Manufacturers Association and specialty chemical associations, was distributed and used throughout the nation in late 1999 by manufacturers, distributors, packagers and formulators.

In the water sector, a number of associations including the American Water Works Association, Association of Metropolitan Sewage Agencies, Water Environment Federation, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, National Association of Water Companies and others representing drinking water and wastewater facilities worked cooperatively with EPA to reach the nation's 190,000 water facilities to ensure awareness, compile readiness information and develop appropriate contingency plans.

“We are proud of the effort made by dedicated EPA employees who worked more than a year and many around the clock as the new millennium arrived,” said Pesachowitz. “Together with business leaders and government officials at every level, we showed that public-private partnerships to protect public health and environment can work well.”

The Agency also has reported that its own internal systems are fully operational and EPA is open for business as usual. The Agency’s Internet site has received a million ‘hits’ since the web site re-opened on Jan. 3, and nearly 18,000 EPA employees were able to perform their duties using their personal computers. For more information, see [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

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